

# The Oracle

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## Teachers adjust to online life while missing the classroom

by Ashley Llaneza

People of all ages have been heavily impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. While it's very obvious that essential workers like doctors and grocery store employees have been working endlessly, so have the teachers who we used to see every day. Although it may not seem like a drastic change, most are taking on the very unfamiliar role of teaching their students online.

We are incredibly lucky to have access to the many technological devices that made the transfer from in class instruction to online instruction possible. However, while the teachers throughout our district are longing to be back in the classroom, they are also learning how to effectively teach their students from a distance.

Most teachers envision their job as waking up every morning, heading to school and instructing their students face to face in a classroom. This remote learning environment prevents them from having access to their main motivators: their students. Believe it or not, the lack of motivation is an issue across the board for both students and teachers.

"I need the energy of my students to really come alive as a teacher. I miss their perspectives, curiosity, and sarcasm," AP Biology teacher Mrs. Emily Mohr said.

Whether introverted or extroverted, every teacher can attest to the fact that in-class instruction is incomparable to remote learning. Interacting with their students and colleagues each day is what makes their job rewarding. Since every day is different, many teachers look forward to going to school to see what the day will hold.

"The best thing about teaching in-person is that each day and class is different. I feed off of the energy of students. I miss sharing examples in my classes

**"I need the energy of my students to really come alive as a teacher. I miss their perspectives, curiosity, and sarcasm."**

-- Mrs. Emily Mohr

and seeing the reactions of my students, whether it be laughing, smiling, cringing, or shaking their heads. Nothing can replace those types of moments," Economics and Psychology teacher Mr. William Mitchell said.

Teachers have faced many additional challenges along with missing the energy from their students. Because some classes revolve primarily around discussions and lectures, like many English and history classes, teachers have been required to find new ways to talk about information with their students. Since they were advised not to use live video-conferencing, many instructors have found creative ways to get their students involved via Google Classroom or other online resources.

"Instead of lectures, I wrote analysis questions. I was trying to give my students a lens through which they could look at the novel we are reading themselves, rather than looking at it through my eyes alone. This is easy enough for me to do in a classroom discussion, but writing questions for students to read, consider, and respond to all alone was a new challenge," English teacher Ms. Hilary Domencic said.

While this new method of teaching isn't preferred, the teachers have learned to adapt in order to keep their students learning and growing each day. Surprisingly, there is a lot of pressure on our instructors during this crisis. With the lack of feedback and in-person interaction with their students, some teachers are worried about letting their students down and are trying their hardest to ensure that lessons are still being understood properly.

"This has been a challenge for all of us. We are trying to make the best of a bad situation. I'm trying to teach Shakespeare which in my class normally involves a lot of in-class reading, projects and small group work to help with interpretation and understanding. I've come up with alternative ways to present the material, but I know it's not the same as it would be in class and I know the kids aren't getting the same experience as they normally would. I feel bad about that," English teacher Mr. Eric Schott said.

Despite the fact that teachers are unable to communicate with their students verbally, seeing them participate and complete their assignments in a timely fashion helps them feel a sense of satisfaction. For the teachers, their students' ability to learn the material and complete the work gives some satisfaction.

Although this change has not been easy for anyone, there are many things that it has taught us and those lessons are some we will never forget. People around the world will come out of this situation with an abundance of gratitude and a much more optimistic outlook on life.

For teachers, their lack of student interaction has made them eager to get back to school and cherish class time.

"That's one reason this experience will make me a better teacher in the long run. I have a renewed sense of purpose and value of the classroom experience," Domencic said.

## Virus costs junior a summer trip to Brazil

by James Engel

Although there are many opportunities for community involvement and volunteer work throughout the local community, there are also projects available to students on a much larger scale.

One of the most unique volunteer opportunities available to high school students is the United States Youth Ambassadors program, which sends students, ages 15-17, throughout Central and South America, as well as the Caribbean.

Junior Gabe Ruano applied to be a part of this program in late 2019. He initially heard about the program through Senior Caroline Clontz, who traveled to the Dominican Republic last summer. Half-Ecuadorian by descent, Ruano lived in South America for a time and is semi-fluent in Spanish.

"Caroline introduced me to [Youth Ambassadors] through a presentation she gave in Spanish class. I was very excited about the idea. I got letters of recommendation and applied that weekend," Ruano said.

Ruano was soon contacted by the organizers of the program and began the long interview process to go overseas as a volunteer.

"I wrote two essays about why I wanted to participate in the program. I filled out a lot of basic information and spoke a minute straight in Spanish. After that, I made it to the semi-final round and did a Skype interview that was about 20 minutes," Ruano said.

In late January, Ruano was informed that he was selected to become a Youth



Ambassador. He was to be sent to Brazil from June 1st to June 19th.

"I was super thrilled. I was honored to have been selected from the pretty decent sized pool of people who had applied. I was excited to represent us and go down there to help in any way I could," Ruano said.

Ruano began preparing for his trip early by beginning to study the Portuguese language.

He expected a full itinerary of the trip sometime in April. As restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 virus began to fall into place in mid-March, the fate of Ruano's trip sat in limbo.

Finally, in late March, he received

an email announcing that the trip would be fully canceled.

"It wasn't a surprise, but it was still sad. I was pretty excited to get to do this and go somewhere I've never gone and helped out. I was looking forward to bringing what I'd learned back here too," Ruano said.

Although all summer trips are canceled, the Youth Ambassadors program is still hoping to do some sort of virtual session in the future, but little has been released so far.

Ruano does hope to travel later in life and possibly participate in a study abroad program in college if given the opportunity. Assuming the world returns to a state of relative normalcy by next summer, Youth Ambassadors will be open for Shaler Area students to travel and volunteer south of our border to learn about other cultures and grow through work and education.

# OPINIONS

## Seniors share thoughts on ending high school at home

by Max Robinson

On March 13th, none of us were expecting that it would be our last day at Shaler. But here we are, more than two months down the road, living in a much different manner than we are accustomed to.

For me, I'm not a huge fan of the remote learning we're using, but I'm still going with the flow. I find it a little difficult to actually learn without live teaching. Doing worksheets day in and out isn't the most fun or engaging thing. I think all of us took our high school education a little for granted.

"You don't know what you have until it's gone" is holding very true right now. I really do miss the days in the classroom, joking with my friends at lunch, and blasting music in the parking lot while sitting in traffic.

Online learning is not able to encapsulate the relationships we build with our teachers and friends while in school. Along with the end of school came

the end of athletics as well.

I don't wanna cry and complain, as there's obviously much bigger issues going on right now, but it was really disheartening to miss out on my senior season. I've been playing lacrosse since I was in 4th grade, and to not be able to walk down the field with my parents on senior night really makes me sad.

I'm really going to miss going out to eat with the boys after every game, all the locker room banter, and of course the bus rides to away games. There's more to sports than just playing the game itself, it's all about the comradire and the bonds you build with your teammates.

It's very easy to get lost in all the news and get depressed, but it's absolutely necessary to stay strong. Along with all the other seniors, I'm upset we won't get to end our year with all the fun events that the classes before us had, but I'm personally

looking to the better times that lay ahead of me.

Soon, we will return to our normal living, but it's still sad to think that we couldn't experience our senior year to the fullest. Graduation and Prom are still a possibility in July, so I'm keeping my fingers crossed for that.

I was looking back at pictures and videos from earlier this school year, and it really has been a great one. Especially when we seniors won the float competition at Homecoming. We still had our fall and winter sports seasons, we got to experience the Friday nights at football games, and of course, we still had two of the three school dances.

Even though I didn't get to finish my school tenure with a normal ending, I'm still grateful for the 11 1/2 years I had. I've come away with a positive retrospective about my time spent at Shaler, and I won't let two months of my senior year ruin that.

by Michaela Brining

Everything that is happening right now is so crazy. The week before quarantine, I was performing on stage with some of my best friends in the musical. There was an audience of more than a hundred people. No one was wearing masks. No one had even heard of social distancing. I never expected things to change so quickly. It felt like one day everything was normal, and the next day everything was falling apart.

In the beginning I was devastated, but I was still hopeful. I hoped for another chance to come to school, see my friends and perform on the Shaler stage one last time. Quickly all of those hopes were dashed.

The pandemic worsened so quickly that it was silly to still hope for these things. Even now, I know that there's a chance I may never have a prom or a graduation ceremony. Although this is

upsetting, I've accepted it. Things are different right now. But, in all

honesty, I'm more worried about the future. Will things ever get back to normal? Will I be able to go to college in the fall?

People always say we are living in a time that is going to make the history books. It is crazy to think that in twenty years I will be telling my own kids about the pandemic. I plan on becoming a high school history teacher so it is even crazier to think that I will be teaching my own students about this.

I am upset that I did not get the senior year I planned, but that's ok. I can't change anything about that. If anything, I have gained a new perspective about the real world because of this pandemic. I no longer feel like a teenager. I feel like an adult- an adult who watches the news, reads the paper and worries about things such as unemployment and the stock market.

It is unfortunate how things ended during my time at Shaler Area, but I am grateful for how much my eyes have been opened.

by Stephanie Bodner

of those we held closest to us in the last four years.

Everyone wanted to experience the last moments before being sent off into the real world.

A world where Mr. Taylor was there to teach you about the anatomy of the heart, while also teaching you how to be a wholesome human being. A world where Mr. Schott would be in the hallway to say hello to. A world where we knew what to expect.

In a way we have already been shown the real world.

Our generation has been thrust into the adult world often. Who else knows what it's like attending school in the wake of mass shootings?

Senior activities were supposed to be a sigh of relief, our time to be a kid. Instead, college creeps closer and closer everyday. If quarantine is a dry run of adulthood, then so far adulthood sucks.

Typing in my ID number everyday to let the school know I am still committed to earning my diploma by way of wifi and Google Classroom, and that I am still alive within the same walls I have been contained in for the last 2 months.

This feels like that part of the movie where the main character realizes that she had taken life for

granted for the first 17 years of her existence.

I never realized how soon things could end. I never realized that my last high school memory would not be crying in the arms of my best friend on the football field in caps and gowns.

The feeling of family with the people we've grown up with for the last 12 years would now only be felt through the occasional Instagram or Snapchat life update.

No one ever warned us to prepare to end your senior year in March because of a pandemic.

BTW, "High School Musical" is nothing close to high school.

Growing up isn't always be built upon lessons from falling off of a bike. Growing up is all about who you surround your years with, who has a helping hand in making you the person you are today.

There is no other group of individuals I'd rather grow up with. From testing our multiplication tables in hopes of becoming math wizards to driving to see familiar faces presented in yards as a sendoff to the real world.

Oh, the places we've been and oh, the places we will go.



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The Oracle

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**The Oracle** is the official student newspaper of Shaler Area High School. Although it is published by the journalism classes, one does not have to be enrolled in a class to contribute.

Opinions expressed in **The Oracle** are those of the individual writers.

Letters to the Editor are encouraged and welcome. Any letter intended for publication must be signed, but names will be withheld upon request. Articles and letters may be mailed to the high school (ATTN: The Oracle) or emailed to oracle@sasd.k12.pa.us.

**The Oracle** reserves the right to condense or omit any letters or articles unfit for publication.

# OPINIONS

## Barry Bonds deserves to be in baseball Hall of Fame

by Dominic DiTommaso

Let me drive this point home similar to the way Barry Bonds drove baseballs over fences: I LOVE BASEBALL. I am addicted to our National Pastime, especially my Cleveland Indians.

However, there are times that I must go off the dugout-edge, every now and then — and I've been going off the dugout-edge for the past eight years.

It once again hit me that Barry Bonds may never get into the Hall of Fame. He is 0-8 at after not being voted in this past year. That leaves two more opportunities for his election, and my last hope is that the voters wait until the last year just to make him "twist in the wind" before finally letting them in.

The truth is that Bonds should have been a first-ballot Hall of Famer.

Bonds was the greatest player in the history of baseball. The hardest thing to do in sports is hit a baseball consistently, and he did it better than anybody.

Bonds does have the most home runs in the history of Major League Baseball, the fifth-most RBI in the history of game, and is the single-season home run king.

Bonds is not in the Hall for two reasons, and neither should be used to keep him out.

First, Bonds was not a good guy. I don't like Bonds as a person, but I love Bonds as a player, but he went out of his way to be a bad guy to the media, who are the people who vote on the Hall of Fame.

"To me, Barry Bonds is the greatest player I have ever seen," John Perrotto, baseball writer, told me before he added, "I did see him be a jerk to people."

But that should not matter.

Bonds would see maybe two good pitches a night, and would crush them.

The other reason I believe he is not in the Hall is because he allegedly resorted to using PEDs. Now he never tested positive for PED use, but we all assume he did.

Before using PEDs, Barry Bonds won three MVPs, won eight Gold Gloves, was an eight-time All-Star, led the league in home runs and RBI in the same season, and had a 40-40 season (steals and home runs). That's Hall of Fame.

Seriously, how can we have a Baseball Hall of Fame without Barry Bonds?

The man won eight Gold Gloves. In Pittsburgh days he would steal bases.



He currently holds the record for on-base percentage, on-base plus slugging and slugging. He was a savant at the plate. He was nearly impossible to get out.

He holds the record and 2nd place (along with 7th place and 11th place) for single-season on-base percentage.

It was the first time a hitter had the advantage over the pitcher. I truly don't know why they didn't just walk him every time. Just ask the Arizona Diamondbacks.

In May of 1998, with two outs in the eighth inning and San Francisco down 8-6 to Arizona, Bonds came to the plate with the bases were loaded. The Diamondbacks decided to do the unthinkable. They walked Bonds with the bases loaded. They gave the Giants a run.

He was once walked a record-232 times in one season.

The few times teams would try to pitch to him, and he almost always made them regret that decision. Nobody in the decade of the 1990s had more home runs, more RBI, or more runs scored than Barry Bonds.

Barry Bonds has waited long enough. He was a giant among Giants, so let him join a Hall of them.

# Congratulations!



**Oracle Seniors -- Class of 2020**

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# Two selected to represent Shaler Area in All-State groups

by Michaela Brining

Every year students from across the state work to perfect their musical talents to audition for the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association, PMEA. This organization hosts many events throughout the year for band, choir and orchestra students.

The process has many steps for students who start by auditioning for Districts and later they may move on to Regions. For the best of the best, the final step is States, one of the biggest accomplishments a high school musician can achieve.

This year, two very talented Shaler Area students were selected for this honor. Junior Zach Sondike was selected to be a member of the PMEA All-State Jazz Band and senior Alex Almonte was selected for the PMEA All State Choir.

Sondike is one of only 18 students from Pennsylvania to be selected for this competitive program. Last year, Sondike was awarded the opportunity to perform at States as a sophomore. This year he auditioned for All-State Jazz Band with a series of videos playing the alto, tenor and baritone saxophone. Sondike was one of only two people in the state to be selected to play the Tenor Saxophone in the All-State Jazz Band.

Sondike said he was thrilled to have the opportunity to create music with some of the most talented people he's ever met.

"It is always a fun time to perform with fellow musicians. Jazz is just a good time," Sondike said.

In addition to playing the Tenor Saxophone, Sondike also plays the clarinet and other types of saxophones.

"I first started playing the clarinet in 5th grade and then started playing the saxophone in 6th...Now I can play most instruments in those two families," Sondike said.

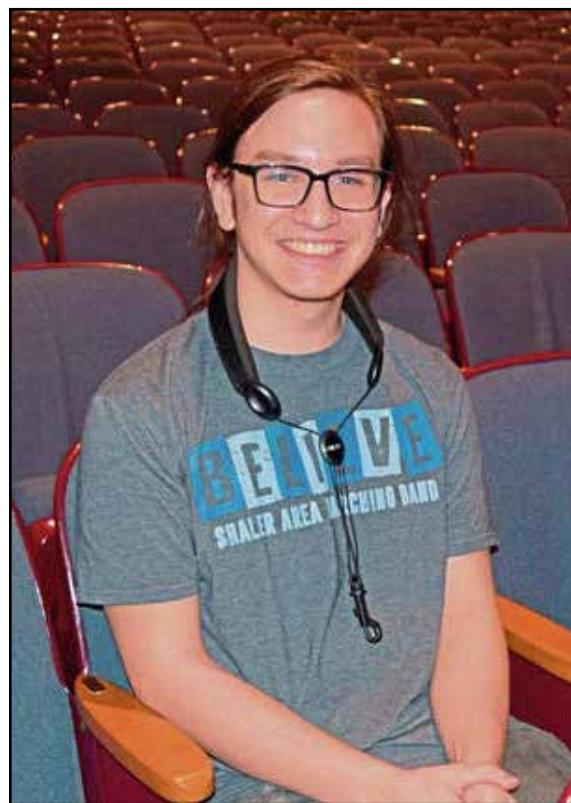
Sondike is a member of the Pit Orchestra for the Musical, Honors Jazz Ensemble I, Honors Wind Ensemble, and is the Drum Major of the Marching Band. He also participates in the Three Rivers Young Peoples Orchestra.

Additionally, he was also selected for PMEA District I West Honors Band, PMEA Honors Jazz Ensemble, PMEA District 1 Orchestra, and Allegheny Valley Honors Band this year alone.

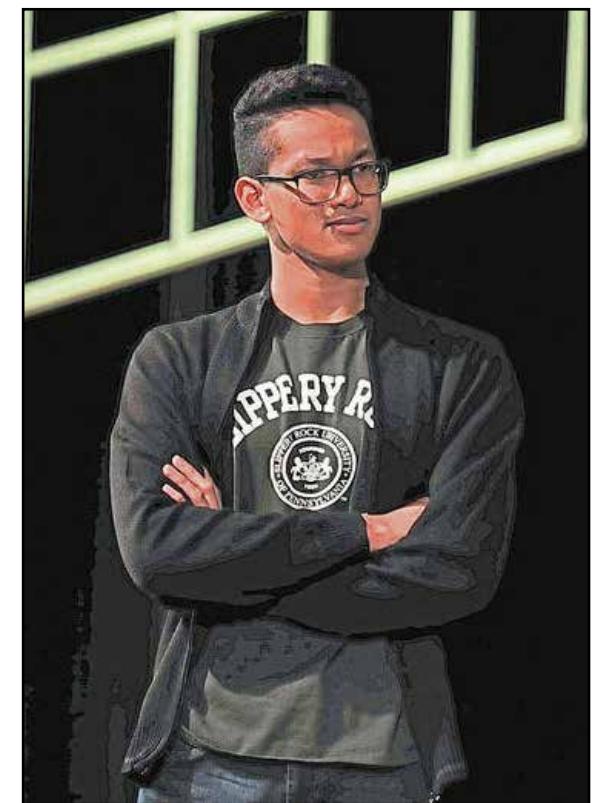
Despite the countless hours Sondike spends practicing and then participating in numerous bands and festivals, he somehow finds free time. When he has the time, Sondike enjoys hanging out with friends at Millvale's steakhouse, otherwise known as Hardee's. Another one of Sondike's hobbies includes his involvement in the cover band the "Book Club", which contains both Shaler musicians both past and present.

Sondike plans on continuing his love of music in the future and keeping it in his life one way or another. He is considering a degree in either Music Education or performance.

Senior Alex Almonte is another and skilled performer who is involved in a variety of projects within the district. Almonte auditioned for PMEA District



Zach Sondike



Alex Almonte

choir earlier this year. Once he was selected for this honor, he took many steps to get to the State level.

"Students from across Allegheny county learn two vocal pieces to audition with for Districts in November. Judges of music teachers, coaches and choir directors listen to each audition blindly. From there, a handful of members are selected for District choir. Once you are a member of this choir, you then repeat the same progress to audition for the next step, regions."

Once students go to Regions, they then have to prepare a vigorous audition via a video application.

Not only did Almonte make all-state choir this year, but he was also selected for this group last year as well.

Alex is a member of Shaler Area's Honors Chamber Choir, Concert Choir and Honors Wind Ensemble. He also performs vocally for his church, is Co-Captain of the Shaler Area Drumline, helps with the Elementary School Musicals and balances countless extracurricular activities.

Alex is also a cast member of Shaler Area Plays and Musicals. You may recognize him as playing the Marius in "Les Miserable", Sir Evelyn Oakley in "Anything Goes", the Beast in "Beauty and the Beast" and, most recently, Lord Farquaad in "Shrek".

Next year, Alex will be continuing his education at Penn State University for Music Education. He hopes to share his passion for music to inspire future students.

This year the PMEA state festival for both Sondike and Almonte was scheduled April 23-25 at Kalahari Resorts in the Poconos. Both students were to train with professionals from across the country. Due to the Pandemic, this event was unfortunately cancelled.

# Bartosh qualifies as National Merit Scholarship finalist

by Michaela Brining

This year, Shaler Area Senior Maddie Bartosh was recognized as one of over 15,000 Finalists in the 2020 National Merit Scholarship Program.

While that might not sound impressive at first, more than 1.5 million students were eligible for this and Bartosh placed in the top one percent of those 1.5 million.

Students qualify for this prestigious status based on their Preliminary SAT scores from their junior year of high school, as well as an application based on their academic and extracurricular achievements.

As a part of this application process, Bartosh had to write an essay about an individual who inspired her as well as send in a Letter of Recommendation.

Not only is Bartosh academically successful, but she also is a member of countless extracurricular activities. She is a cast member of the fall plays and spring musicals, a member of English, Music and National Honors Societies, Uniforms Coordinator for choir, a member of Honors Chamber choir and Jazz band, Co-Chairperson for the performing Arts Float, an alter server at her church, a volunteer for events at Reserve, a runner for the track and field



Dr. Royall, Mrs. Miller, Maddie Bartosh and Mr. Aiken

believes taking AP and honors level courses have prepared her for both SAT testing and time management.

"Many classes at Shaler have prepared and helped me become a finalist in the National Merit Award, especially Mrs. Loudon's class. That essay we read on the SAT and how to take standardized tests, plus the multiple choice practice she gave us helped the most out of any class."

Bartosh encourages underclassmen to take as many challenging courses as possible. Although it may not seem like it at the time, every class she has taken has prepared her for a new challenge and helped her achieve personal accomplishments.

"My advice to underclassmen is, whatever you do, you better have a passion for it. If it doesn't make you happy, it's taking time away from the things you do love. You can do anything you put your mind to, as long as you focus and do it for the right reasons. And no matter how hard things get, or how busy the day is, make sure to have fun and enjoy yourself."

The amount of schoolwork and activities Bartosh has done over the past four years may have been overwhelming, but she is grateful for the experience.

Bartosh will be attending Coastal Carolina University and plans to major in Marine Science.

team and she works at the Pittsburgh Zoo.

Bartosh manages to balance her many activities, jobs and service work while maintaining high grades in multiple AP, Honors and CHS courses.

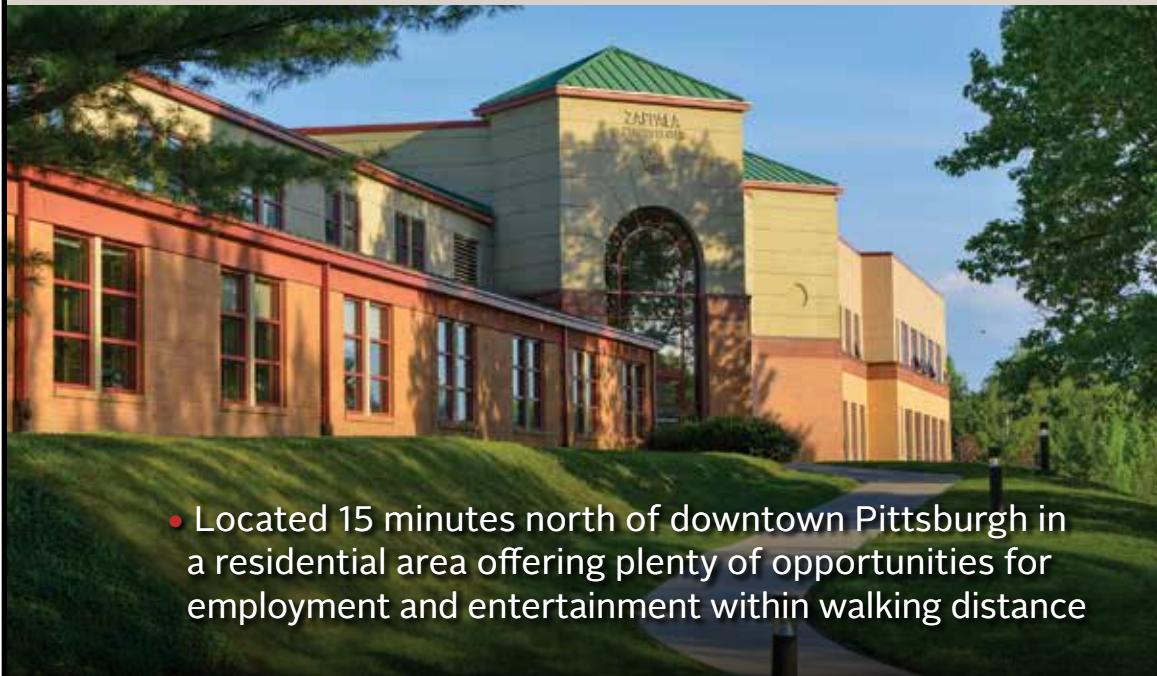
"How I balance it all is hard to say. I really just take it all one step at a time and I make sure my calendar is organized. I regularly communicate with teachers and coaches and sponsors to make sure I can fulfill each one of my commitments to the fullest. And I'm just really passionate about everything I do. If I didn't love it, I wouldn't do it, especially since I'm already doing so much," Bartosh said.

Looking back at her time in high school, Bartosh

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# KDKA's Pompeani shares thoughts from sports world

by Dominic DiTommaso

It has become clear to me why Pittsburghers love Bob Pompeani almost as much as they love Primanti's and the colors black and yellow. He is a lifetime Pittsburgher. He attended Hopewell High School and then attended Point Park University.

Pompeani has been working as a sports anchor at KDKA for over thirty years, and in 2015 he was inducted into the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame. He is also a member of the Tri-State PGA Golf Hall of Fame as well as the Beaver County Sports Hall of Fame.

He is not only immersed in the sports world. Pompeani is on the board of directors for the American Heart Association, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and Partners for Quality Inc, and the Give the Kids the World Foundation. He has also been on the Executive Committee for the Mario Lemieux Foundation since 1995.

In a recent interview with him, he showed that his knowledge and passion of sports is as prominent as the bridges over the city's waters.

**Q: How have you and your family been doing in these times?**

A: Like everybody else, just trying to be patient and smart. I think people get ahead of themselves sometimes and everybody's sacrificing but it's a small sacrifice to make based on what people on the front line are doing and sacrificing every day they go to work which we don't have to do that fortunately. I think you need to just remember by doing what they're asking you to do when it's not that big of an ask that you could lessen these numbers.

**Q: Have you learned anything with the absence of sports these past few months?**

A: I miss it. I think we all do, but when you do it for a living you take it for granted every day where there's a lot of stuff to cover and now we're just going as we go and trying to fill the time with whatever news items come up, and it's not that easy when there are no game to cover. I miss it. Hopefully, at some point, we're resuming with no people in attendance because I think people want to see something new on television to preoccupy their time.

**Q: Over the years, what are some of the best interviews you have done?**

A: Troy Polamalu is really different. He's thoughtful, reaches deep into his soul to give you answers, not your typical sports answers that you would get from athletes. I think one of the most intelligent guys I've ever interviewed was [Penguins goalie] Tom Barraso. [He was a] really, really smart guy. He would think things over very closely and sometimes he was a little over-the-top in terms of if he had thoughts that maybe you were trying to go someplace where you really weren't because he was thinking deeply into the question. I appreciated [Sidney] Crosby but he's pretty much a machine when it comes to answers. He's really good and a tremendous person but you're not gonna get anything crazy out of him.

**Q: What are some of the worst interviews you have ever done?**

A: Lawrence Taylor. I got thrown out of a New York Giants locker room because of a line of questioning that I thought was fair but he took exception to. Donald Evans and I, for some reason, never got along. He took things way too personally. Most of the interviews I have done have been good. Some are more colorful than others, but I haven't had issues with anyone.

**Q: Have you ever been afraid to interview a certain person or ask a specific question?**

A: No, not at all. That person should understand the role that he/she is in, and I've always told people

that we do seminars with young athletes and tell them what to expect and that there are no answers you can't give if you're uncomfortable with an answer, [but just] move on. You can do it in a professional way and I stress that you carry a platform which means if you handle it well it can lead to other things after your career's over. If you act [unprofessional], you're not gonna get many opportunities.



KDKA sports broadcaster Bob Pompeani

**Q: Are there any events, past events or recent, that you wish you could've covered or attended that you didn't?**

A: There's a ton of those, I'm sure. For 22 years I've done preseason play-by-play for the Steelers and I wish I could do the regular games. I've been fortunate to go to nine Super Bowls and Stanley Cup championships, baseball division championships with the Pirates in the 1990s, Cotton Bowls, Orange Bowls, Rose Bowls, every Bowl I think. I wish I was there for some of the stuff I've seen with the legendary players. I've done pretty much everything I've wanted to do.

**Q: What have been some of your favorite places to visit outside of Pittsburgh?**

A: We were fortunate enough to cover the Pro Bowl every year in Hawaii, and it's actually a good way to talk to players and their families laid back as opposed to a scenario of a locker room when the players are on guard. This is more relaxed, you get more answers out of them, so that's my favorite place to go. One of the most interesting experiences I've ever had was at the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan. I've been fortunate enough to cover two of those. The one in Japan was really fascinating to me just because there were a lot of Penguin players who were playing in the hockey competition. We went over there and spent 42 days and it was pretty awesome.

**Q: I know how much you love golf — how much do you try to golf a year?**

A: The answer's not enough. If it was up to me I would play every day. I can't do that, even though I belong to a club. I'd like to play a lot more and hopefully in time I will.

**Q: What are some of your favorite courses to play on?**

A: Oakmont is number one. Laurel Valley is number two. There are so many other great ones. I've had the honor and pleasure playing Augusta National six times. That's still a pinch-me moment and I have all these pictures in my office [of that]. I wish I could go back. I may never get that chance again. That by far, was the best.

**Q: Did you see Tiger Woods' win at the Masters coming?**

A: No. I think that Tiger's an amazing person and athlete. I never thought that after four back surgeries and everything else he was going through, [in addition to] him getting older, that you could win Majors on the PGA Tour. But then, eleven years and almost 4,000 days since he had won a Major, to expect someone to come back and win one with all the young guns out there, but he re-invented himself. I wouldn't be surprised if he wins a couple more. Will

he top Jack Nicklaus' 18, I don't know. That would be tough.

**Q: Have you played any rounds with professional athletes?**

A: I've been fortunate. I got to play with Arnold Palmer. I got to play with Gary Player. When they had the 84 Lumber Classic, I played with a bunch of people there including Vijay Singh, John Daly, Glen Day. It's been pretty cool.

**Q: I saw that you're a Golden State Warriors fan — is that correct?**

A: Yes.

**Q: How did you become a Warriors fan?**

A: I got to know Steve Kerr a little but at various golf outings. I'm a big Steve Kerr fan.

**Q: We're seeing this trend of super duos — do you think it's good for the NBA?**

A: I don't like how they're constructed. I don't mind it if you draft people or make a trade, but now it's a recruitment more than anything else. I don't like that. To me, it undermines the whole reason for having a Draft or the role of a general manager. I don't like it that way.

**Q: Heading to MLB real quick, the major story of baseball before everything that would happen was the scandal with the Houston Astros. How would you resolve this situation?**

A: I'm not a believer of stripping any titles because it happened. I never was a believer of that. People were there, it happened. What I would've done is I probably would've suspended everybody on that team. This is a serious business. I don't think the league took it seriously enough. They weren't sure how big that thing was, but I think they went into a cover-up stage. They're doing that to protect the integrity of the game but the integrity of the game has already been compromised. Some people think it's fine. [They'll say that] cheating is part of the game. I can understand that, but if you're corresponding by bangs and everything else they were trying to do, no you're getting into an area that I don't think is right.

**Q: The NFL Draft took place back in April. Were you surprised how smoothly it went on television considering all the technology that was used and everything that could have gone wrong?**

A: Yes. I thought there would [be]. They had it all worked out and once they had everyone get into their rooms, it was good. They had some pre-produced stuff ready and you always expect that to happen. I thought Roger Goodell came off as human as he ever looked.

————— Cont. on page 7

# Promising season lost to pandemic

by Dominic DiTommaso

This time hasn't been great for any of us, especially the spring athletes at Shaler Area High School who have had their seasons cancelled.

When Governor Wolf cancelled school for the rest of the year, the spring sports seasons weren't far behind. It was an even tougher pill to swallow here at Shaler Area because of the expectations that were in place for the teams and individuals.

"It became inevitable as the pandemic (spread)," Athletic Director Clint Rauscher said. "It was even more disappointing because our spring teams, across the board, were very talented and I think all of the teams would have made the playoffs (for the first time) since I have been here."

The spring sports that lost this season are baseball, track, tennis, boys volleyball, softball, boys lacrosse and girls lacrosse. All of those sports have been cancelled, and it's affected each and every one.

For baseball, five seniors were set to play this season including Jake Bredl, Nick Rispoli, Will Jamison, Grant Galloway, and Kyle Ford. Their season consisted of one scrimmage against North Allegheny. Last season, the baseball team went 15-6-1 and won the WPIAL Championship by beating Laurel Highlands 8-1.

The boys tennis team was looking forward to a great season. The team won its only exhibition 5-0 over Vincentian Academy. The senior tennis players are Sam Bens, Evan Michalek, and James Engel.

The senior track athletes are Nathan Hayward, Jacob Ishman, Dalton Kalbaugh, Cam Mbalo, Madeline Bartosh, Mandi Dobson, Samantha Goetz, Malina Kilgore, Shannon Roche, Autumn Roney, Julianna Sciuollo, Aliza Zelina, and Bailey Ritchey.

"It is very unfortunate that the season was cancelled. We had very high expectations for several athletes to get atop of the WPIAL medal stand and a few of those athletes to qualify for the state cham-

pionship," track coach Shawn Ryan said. "We even expected to finish the season with a WPIAL and State Champion (individual athlete). There is still hope for the athletes as they have a bright and promising future if they (remember) what I tell them day in and day out: 'be present and be great when you need to be!'"

**"It was disappointing for the seniors that had worked and trained for this final opportunity to compete and represent Shaler Area. We had some tremendous athletes that were going to be very [successful]."**

-- Mr. Clint Rauscher

Boys volleyball had a fantastic season last year under Coach Paul Stadelman, finishing the season 17-5-3, including a stretch where they went 11-1 in the middle of the season. They reached the WPIAL semi-finals and PIAA quarter-finals. The seniors on the team are Tommy Borgen, Trapper Crain, Billy Dadowski, John Erlewein, Daniel Evans, Steve Hoffman, John Kenst, Nick Koorsen, Grant Newland, Jon Schimmel, and Don Truong.

Girls softball, coached by Tom Sorce, will not be taking place this year, after going 10-7 last season. The senior softball players are Tori Martrano, Emily Cavacini, Meghan Lacey, and Ella Richards.

Boys lacrosse, coached by Bill Wightman, went 4-10 last year. Seniors Tom Carlson, Andrew Demchsin, Zach Graff, Calvin Morris, Max Robinson, Cole Siford, Nick Simunovic, and Adam Williard will not have the chance to improve on last seasons record.

Girls lacrosse went 6-10 last season. Their seniors are Ava Kozej, Rylee Wilson, Autumn Bauer, Greta Kozej, Mackenzie Romac, Jasey Reiser, Jade Hromanik, Lacey Muto, Kelly Pare, and Ashlyn Wightman.

The ones most affected by this are the seniors, who won't get to participate in their final year playing sports at Shaler Area High School.

"It was disappointing for the seniors that had worked and trained for this final opportunity to compete and represent Shaler Area. We had some tremendous athletes that were going to be very [successful, maybe] even a [State Champ]. To those student [athletes, I] wish them the best."

# Seniors recognized in virtual senior night

by Max Robinson

Unfortunately, this year all spring sports and sponsored activities were cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic. So, on April 24th at 8:20 p.m., which is 20:20 on a 24-hour clock, Shaler Area hosted a virtual senior night for all of its spring athletes.

The spring coaches and Athletic Director Mr. Clint Rauscher wanted to find a way to have something special for the seniors on all of the teams and the virtual senior night idea was born.

"I got player information from all the coaches for the PowerPoint, the maintenance guys set up the stadium, and Mr. Laslovic and Mr. Connolly volunteered to do the announcing," Raushcer said.

Similar to a traditional senior night, the names of each senior along with some tidbits about them were read over the speakers at Mt. Royal Stadium. The event was live-streamed on Facebook.

"I ran the PowerPoint and got the audio from the loudspeaker [to stream it live]," Raushcer said. "I was very pleased with the end result. My biggest concern was the technology aspect...but it generally worked out very well."

He said he received plenty of positive feedback from both players and parents.

He also implied that the individual teams are thinking about ways to recognize their seniors in a more traditional way, but he doesn't see anything like that happening in the near future.

"There are a lot of coaches that really want to do some things with their teams. Unfortunately, there isn't much anyone can do right now because the PIAA is prohibiting in-person contact between players and coaches until July 1," he said.

While it was not what any senior really wanted, the effort to recognize them did not go unnoticed.

"I thought it was a nice way to acknowledge all the sports in the middle of all the craziness," senior girls lacrosse player Mackenzie Romac said.

## Pompeani — from page 6

**Q: What were your takeaways from Pittsburgh's draft?**

A: Pretty much what I expected. They weren't gonna trade up. They didn't have the ammunition to do that. They were gonna sit there and wait for something. They felt pretty good with the options they had. I thought if [JK] Dobbins fell to them, they would take him just because he was an insurance policy for [James] Conner beyond this year. But instead, they chose to go wide receiver. Overall, I gave it a B- grade.

**Q: Were you surprised that the Steelers didn't take a quarterback?**

A: No. They made it clear that they believe in Mason Rudolph. Is it the right call? We'll find out. If something happens to Roethlisberger and Rudolph comes in and struggles, then the answer is no.

**Q: Do you think the Steelers can win the AFC North?**

A: It'll be very difficult. I think it's probably the best division in football. Maybe the NFC West may be the division that could rival it, but I think it's going to be extremely competitive and situations like that are good for the league, good for the division, good for each team, and the rivalry.

## Like many, girls bowling season cut short

by Julia Falgione

The Shaler Area Girls Varsity Bowling team finished their season as co-champions with an overall record of 8-2. The season, for the girls, started off with a win against Butler, which many of the girls said was a turning point for them as a team.

"(Butler was) a team that was undefeated last season and won WPIBL championships and regionals," Bella Pilyih, captain of the team said. "This set up our confidence for the rest of the season."

The girls made it to the playoffs with their impressive record. For the first round of playoffs, they placed second out of eighteen teams.

"Going in we were one of the middle-averaging teams. The team bowled extremely well and we placed second after all three games, beating out teams that had much higher averages going into the event," Pilyih said.

They had to play additional baker games to determine who was to place first, second and third.

"A baker game is where there are five people and each person on the team bowls a frame," Ella Richards said.

There were three bowlers who qualified for the singles event: Shannon Roche, Macey Prosser, and Bella Pilyih.

"We all qualified for singles regionals. At regionals, the team definitely struggled and did not do as well as we hoped," Pilyih said.

The girls did tremendously well and built a team that could succeed in a section with many talented teams.

"The team has exceeded expectations for being a group filled with all the girls, except one, having only a year or two of bowling experience. Our season was outstanding and it will only set us up for success next year," Pilyih said.

They were supposed to compete in the state championship, but were unable to because of the Covid-19 outbreak.

# McKenry making the transition from behind the plate to behind the microphone

by Anthony Cugini

Michael McKenry played professional baseball for seven years for the Rockies, Pirates, and Cardinals. His path to the MLB wasn't easy, but he stayed determined and strong willed to make it to the big leagues.

Making the MLB isn't an easy thing to do. To make it to the top you need to have positive influences and even some negative ones.

"The biggest influence, outside of God, was the critics and everyone was a critic at one point," McKenry said. "My mom was the one that showed me true grit. She had a very tough childhood and never complained, never expected, just worked and worked."

Both positive and negative influences helped McKenry reach the highest level of professional baseball in 2010 with Colorado. After just six games with Colorado he was picked up by Boston. Just three months later he was traded to Pittsburgh where he spent the bulk of his time in the major league.

An injury suffered in 2013 eventually caused McKenry's playing career to end, but it happened to bring about a chance at another career.

"When I got hurt in '13 I was asked if I wanted to fill in for (Kent Tekulve on television). I was scared, but was encouraged by my wife to take the risk. Ultimately that is what planted a seed for AT&T to call me for an interview years later."

Despite the taste of life in the broadcast booth, McKenry still wasn't he was ready to end his playing days.

"Even (after '13) I still wasn't sure I was ready to retire from the game but AT&T gave me most of the off-season to make the decision. I will be forever grateful for that. I did not decide til the middle of January. But a dream of mine was to retire on my own terms and I got to do that which was incredible, and I have not once regretted my decision."



**Michael McKenry hits a home run in Atlanta in 2011 (Scott Cunningham – Getty Images)**

While he has not regretted leaving the dugout, it doesn't mean he will never go back.

"It has been a gracious transition out of playing. I was always told I would be a better coach than a player. I am sure at some point I will walk that road."

McKenry has been a part of the AT&T Sports broadcast team for the last two seasons. He continues to anchor the pre-game and post-game shows at the network. He never planned to be on television after his career ended.

"I grew up with two different learning disabilities that made me scared to death to speak in front of

people for a very long time. How I got past it was leaping into the deep end, and getting comfortable with the uncomfortable."

This was just one of the things McKenry had to overcome in his life. Playing in MLB and being around the game of baseball teaches you a lot. McKenry learned plenty.

"Stay on a narrow path. Treat yourself like a business — invest in yourself. If you use your platform the right way it will carry over into your next chapter. Be present. Enjoy the journey. Know who you are and keep solid footing."



# Ivy League grad hopes to turn magic into a career

by Ashley Llaneza

The world of magic is most commonly associated with people like Harry Houdini and Penn Jillette.

While it is hard to imagine someone taking up magic as a full time job, it is a profession that some people enjoy pursuing. Despite the fact that it is a unique, entertaining career, it involves a great deal of work in both the business and performance aspect.

Jon Tai is a Cornell University graduate whose passion for magic has led him to a career that involves performing peculiar, mind-boggling tricks to audiences of curious spectators.

Growing up in New Jersey, Tai lived a pretty normal life. It wasn't until eighth grade that he became curious about the world of magic. Tai's interest was sparked by watching a magician perform card tricks at a Chinese New Year party.

After this experience, he was eager to learn how to perform different magic tricks on his own. Although he didn't begin his career in magic until later on in life, Tai's interest persisted.

He continued to work hard in high school and eventually attended an Ivy League school where he majored in psychology and minored in information science, theatre, and philosophy.

While he was in school, he began working a medical software job. He proceeded to work in that field for almost nine years before deciding to pursue magic full time. Fortunately, the money he made at his job allowed him to have the financial stability and security needed in order to begin his career in magic.

"I had saved up a good amount of money from working, and I could look at my situation and think, 'You know what, I could go from this job to no in-



**Jon Tai**

come overnight, and I could be okay for a long period of time,'" Tai said.

Throughout the transition, Tai's family always supported him. Additionally, his wife provided him with subtle support when he planned to jump start his

new career.

"A lot of my friends had parents that came from a similar background, who immigrated here and worked their butts off so that their kids could have a much better chance in life. I know a lot of my friends' parents wouldn't have been very cool with their child getting that serious in magic, but my parents were always very supportive," Tai said.

After leaving the medical software company, Tai was required to build a name for himself in the magic industry. He initially reached out to a friend who was the owner of a small cafe and inquired about performing tricks. Building off that, Tai was able to pick up gigs at restaurants doing table-side magic, but Tai has learned that magic is the easy part of the equation.

"Figuring out the business side of it was really the big question mark. I know magic, I'm obsessed with magic, and I have confidence in magic. Actually finding ways to get paid for it and get paid for it regularly that would be the interesting thing to figure out," Tai claimed.

Although finding ways to get paid was difficult, Tai enjoyed his work. Luckily, he was able to connect with Liberty Magic, a performing arts theater located in downtown Pittsburgh.

The opportunity to connect with Liberty Magic was described by Tai as "serendipitous". He is currently working on creating his own full length show that is set to be performed at Liberty Magic by the end of the year. It is scheduled to run from December 2 through January 3.

Every day offers a new adventure for Tai. His daily routine depends on when he is performing at Liberty Magic or another venue. In normal circumstances, the early months of the year are slower for booking, which allows him more time to think of new tricks to perform for audiences.

"In order for a magic show to be really wonderful, it has to be more than just tricks. It has to mean something. It has to communicate something," Tai said.

Although it took him a while to gain confidence, Tai is incredibly passionate about his work. He spends a large portion of his time looking at new material and perfecting his skill.

Most of the time, Tai admits that his practice requires more mental ability than physical. He focuses on tricks that will leave a long term impact on one's memory.

"Magic is so much more than just a slight of hand and moves. That is an integral part of it, but a lot of it is psychology and memory. You play with people's perceptions and how they view the world. A big part of magic is more than what just happens in the trick, but everything that happens before and after," Tai said.

While Tai is focused on creating a sustainable lifestyle out of his magic profession, the current situation because of the Covid-19 shutdown has not been easy on those who depend on performing in front of crowds but he's trying to look at the bright side.

"Yeah, not the best time for magicians, or any live entertainment for that matter, right now. I'm lucky to have been in a solid financial situation with a good amount of cushion and my wife is able to continue working remotely, so all things considered we're doing OK," he said.

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